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SOME

REMARKS

UPON THE

Rev^d. Mr. *ANDERSON's*

POSITIONS

Concerning the

Unlawfulneſs of Stage-Plays.

In a LETTER to the Author.

——*Neque ſemper arcum,*
Tendit Apollo.

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A

LETTER, &c.

Reverend Sir,

I Have read the Sermon publiſhed under your Name, intitled, *The Uſe and Abuſe of Diverſions*; and, as you ſeem to expect that your Diſcourſe will not have the full Effect you deſire, upon every one of your Readers, I ſhall, without the Ceremony of an Excuſe, give you the Reaſons, why it has not entirely ſatisfied me.

The fair and candid Way, in which you profeſs to treat your Argument, highly de-

ſerves Commendation. I believe (as you deſire our Superiors ſhould do) that you are ſincerely of the Opinion you deliver, concerning the Sinfulneſs of Stage-plays: And I beg of you to think of me, in the ſame favourable Way, that I am, with equal Sincerity, of another Opinion: I will not ſay that I look upon you as *honeſtly*, tho' *culpably* in an Error: Theſe Terms are often placed near one another; but, I confeſs, I could never reconcile them together; I think of you that you are *honeſtly*, and *therefore not culpably* in an Error; and of my ſelf, that tho' I ſhould be *honeſtly* miſtaken in my Opinion, I am in no Fault at all.

NOR do you deſerve leſs Praiſe, for laying open the Madneſs, with which the faſhionable Folks of this Place have been for ſome Time poſſeſſed; and on which a Miniſter of the Goſpel, (and indeed a Man who has the Proſperity of his Country at Heart) can *never* be too copious, and *hardly* too ſevere. I am far from arraigning your Sermon; a few Things excepted, I could ſubſcribe to it; But I beg Leave to differ from

from you in an abſtract theoretical Point, which makes the Subject of your Appendix, *viz.* That Stage-plays are abſolutely forbidden by the Goſpel.

I hope I do your Argument no Injuſtice, (I am ſure I do not intend it) when I ſay, that it muſt be carried to an abſolute and unlimited Prohibition: Not condemning the Abuſe of the Stage, becauſe of Immoralities, but *ſhutting* (as you term it) *the Gates of the Play-houſe* altogether, and forbidding theatrical Repreſentations, let them be never ſo noble and ſublime, never ſo warm Incentives to Virtue, never ſo powerful Preſervatives againſt Vice.

At the ſame Time I admit, that Things innocent in themſelves may become the Subjects of Divine Prohibitions; that is, where the very *Uſe* does by a moral Neceſſity lead into *Abuſes*; But I have not obſerved any one divine moral Precept, forbidding the Uſe of Things innocent, merely, becauſe of the *Poſſibility* of an Abuſe: In judging of ſuch Tendencies the Scriptures ſhall always be my Rule: And if I there find poſitive

ſitive Injunctions to abſtain from any Practice, I lay my Hand upon my Mouth, reſting aſſured, from the Declarations of Divine Wiſdom, that the *innocent Uſe* of ſuch Things is *next to impoſſible*.

But it muſt likewiſe be allowed, that the Scriptures are by no Means ſilent upon the Subject of immoral and lewd Compoſitions: Impurities, Obſcenity, Vice, and unprofitable Speaking, are loudly exclaimed againſt in the general; nor is it all material, whether theſe Qualities are to be found in a Book, or in a Speech; in a Play, or in a Sermon; whether they are ſignified by Words or Actions; every vicious or idle Word, or Deed is forbidden. Perhaps it may be ſaid with Juſtice, that at ſome Time or other, Doctrines have been inforced from the Pulpit more dangerous, more deſtructive to Honeſty, to good Morals, and to Society, than the moſt abandon'd Play-writer ever *durſt* bring upon the Stage.

The Queſtion between us is a Queſtion in Fact; whether ſuch a Prohibition of *all* Stage-

Stage-plays is to be found in Scripture? You affirm, and I deny. You likewiſe ſeem to think, that were even natural Morality or good Reaſon to be the Rule, few or none of our modern Plays would ſtand the Teſt. So far I agree with you, that *many* whole Drama's would be cut off; *many* others terribly maimed; and *not many* left altogether entire; I heartily wiſh we had ſuch an *index expurgatorius*: But this does not hinder the *Rule* to be good, and the Execution of it is far from being impracticable; nay, there are Offices in Being, which, if duly exerciſed, would cut off all Complaints of this Sort.

Such Sounds alone ſhould pleaſe a Britiſh *Ear,*
As Cato's *ſelf had not diſdain'd to hear.*

Were theſe admirable Words of Mr. *Pope*'s taken for a Standard, in licenſing Stage-plays, there would be little Occaſion for ſtretching the Words of Scripture, to a Senſe, which I doubt they cannot bear. Or if the Name of a virtuous Heathen is not thought forcible enough, let Mr. *Chillingworth* in our neighbouring Country, or the late

late excellent Principal *Hamilton* in our own be ſubſtituted in his Stead.

You ſay that the *Athenians* had a very mean Opinion of Comedies: Their Authority you leave, when it makes againſt you, and take Side with the *Lacedemonian*, who ſaid (rightly in your Opinion) that in Tragedies the *Athenians* play'd the Fool in good Earneſt. To be able to draw a concluſive Argument from this, one ſhould know at what Period that Law was made, that no Areopagite ſhould write a Comedy: If it was *before* the Reformation of the *Athenian* Stage by *Menander*, I do not at all wonder at their Contempt; for ſuch of the Comedies before his Time, as have been preſerved to us, are generally very poor Pieces: Not ſo much ludicrous, as ridiculous; even a Mountebank's *Merry Andrew* would be hiſs'd now a-days, for ſuch Puerilities, as we ſee abounding in *Ariſtophanes*.

But tho' the *Athenians* putting a Value upon Tragedy, was fooliſh in the Eyes of a *Spartan*, who placed all Virtue in the Contempt

tempt of Danger and of Death, yet the Effect of ſuch Repreſentations was clearly ſeen, when upon the bare Mention of a diſhonourable and unworthy Thought in a Play of *Euripides*, (I think) the whole Audience roſe up, and left the Theatre: So much were their Minds, (thro' a juſt Dignity and chaſt Morality, kept up by their Tragic Poets) habituated to (at leaſt) the Study and Approbation of Virtue. I wiſh I could ſay the ſame Thing of our Aſſemblies at home.

But give me Leave, Sir, to find Fault with you for one Thing. The only Point in Diſpute was, Whether ſuch a Tragedy as *Cato*, or ſuch a Comedy as the *Funeral*, fell under the Prohibition? And upon this I expected from your Title, that the Argument would turn. But you ſeem to have choſen the idleſt Things, which the Patrons of the Stage have dropt, as the main Grounds upon which they rely. If they have given up, or but weakly fought for, their Cauſe, you could not fail to ſee, Sir, that the Strength did not ly where they have placed it. One ſays that Stage-plays were dan-

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gerous, in the Infancy of Chriſtianity, to new Converts; and therefore the Fathers inveighed againſt them: But now the Danger is not ſo great. From this you (very juſtly) infer, That if Stage-plays were as wicked in the Days of the Apoſtles, as in the Days of thoſe Fathers, their Indignation againſt them, muſt at leaſt be as ſtrong: And for proving that they were as wicked, you appeal to Hiſtory. The Argument you oppoſe is ſo trifling that it deſtroys itſelf: If *all* Plays in the Days of the Fathers were corrupt, the good Men did well to diſſuade Chriſtians againſt them: And they had good Warrant for ſo doing; not becauſe they were *Stage-plays*, but becauſe they were *immoral*; which is of eternal Truth, and therefore ſtill remains a Rule. But to be preſent at virtuous or innocent Entertainments, is no where diſcouraged; and if the Fathers had done it, even in the early Times, they had gone beyond their Commiſſion.

TRUE Tragedy is a ſerious Lecture upon our Duty, ſhorter than an epick Poem, and longer than a Fable, otherwiſe differing

ing from both only in the Method, which is Dialogue, inſtead of Narration; its Province is to bring us in Love with the more exalted Virtues, and to create a Deteſtation of the blacker, and (humanly ſpeaking) more enormous Crimes.

COMEDY on the contrary, anſwers *Perſius*'s Deſcription of *Horace*.

Omne vaſer vitium ridenti, Flaccus, amico
Tangit, & admiſſus, circum precordia ludit:

AN inſinuating Mirth, laughs us out of our Frailties by making us aſham'd of them. Thus, where they are well intended, Tragedy and Comedy work to one Purpoſe; The one *manages* us as Children, and the other *convinces* us as Men.

SHOULD then this Queſtion have been propos'd in the primitive Times, Whether ſuch Entertainments were to have been encouraged, or totally prohibited, I imagine that the Anſwer would have been given without Heſitation, That whatever was con-

 ducive

ducive to the Practice of Virtue, inſtead of being unlawful, was Praiſe-worthy.

I forbear to inſiſt on the Advantages of acquiring Elegance in Taſte, in Pronounciation, and in Geſture, to all which a well regulated Stage would be greatly aſſiſting; and thoſe are certainly not Things to be deſpiſed even by the ſtricteſt Chriſtians.

ANOTHER of the Authors quoted by you finds out, *That the Apoſtles no where reprimanded Stage Players, tho' they could not fail to meet them every where*, and thence concludes, That they are lawful. From this, you rear up an Argument againſt the Author, that ſince ſuch Silence would be very unjuſtifiable, conſidering the Corruptions of the ancient Stage, therefore it is impoſſible that the Apoſtles could be guilty of it, and ſtraight you ſet your ſelf to work, to find out ſome where or other, directly or indirectly, in the ſacred Writings, that the Apoſtles have not been ſilent. But as you ſeem to underſtand the Author, he does not deſerve an Anſwer. If he means, That from this Silence

of

of the Apoſtles, ſuch a Sanction was given to the Stage, that the moſt abominable Impurities, and Wickedneſs, became tolerable, providing they were brought there: I ſay, if that was his Meaning, it was below your Notice. But if he means, "That "tho' there were Stage-plays in thoſe "Days, yet the Apoſtles did not condemn "them becauſe they *might be* vitious, un-"leſs they were *actually* ſo;" I doubt it is unanſwerable. The Tongue may be abuſed, and too often is made an Inſtrument of the worſt Crimes; but it can not be ſaid, that the Apoſtles in forbiding ſuch Crimes, denied us the Uſe of Speech.

The third Anſwer is to what is urged by *Filmer:* No wonder, that *Filmer*, an infamous Court-ſycophant, an Enemy to the Race of Mankind, ſhould be willing to ſecure Impunity for the moſt monſtrous Abuſes of the Stage. He indeed is loth to part with a ſingle vitious or idle Expreſſion in our Plays: Every Thing was material for his Purpoſe, which could enervate our Minds, and bring us to reliſh or wiſh for that Slavery which he allots for

us.

us. His Diſtinction concerning Obſcenity of Speech is worthy of ſo faithful a Servant to Popery. *Obſcenity of Speech is inconvenient*, ſays he, *and then only criminal or ſinful when either uſed to Exceſs by Way of Encouragement to others, or by our ſelves ſet up in Competition with our Duty to God.* I imagine I hear *Sanchez* or *Valentia*. I could have excuſed you for not mentioning, or not anſwering ſuch a Writer.

But to the grand Point, the Meaning of thoſe Texts of Scripture brought by you in ſupport of your Opinion; upon theſe I beg Leave to offer the following Remarks.

1*mo*, As to the Words *Uncleanneſs*, *Filthineſs*, *fooliſh Talking*, *and Jeſting*; you ſay (*Page* 47.) *That no Man can know that the Apoſtle's Intention was not ſo high as to have reach'd the Comedies and Tragedies of his own Time: The Words do not want to be ſtretch'd to reach the Length of the Heathen Stage, and the Apoſtle ought to have intended ſomething againſt it.* I ſuppos'd that *you* was to prove ſomething, *viz.* That there were ſome Texts

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in Scripture declaring either expreſly or implicitely againſt Stage-plays. Inſtead of that, you lay upon your Adverſary the Burden of proving the contrary of your Propoſition: And thereby invert your own Caſe; which is that of one affirming, and not of one barely denying. But indeed the Obſervation does not hold: For *any Man may know* that the Apoſtle's Intention by theſe Words, was ſo high, and no higher, than to reach ſuch Plays as are filthy: Againſt theſe he both did intend and ought to have intended ſomething; but not againſt innocent Plays. In ſhort your Argument ſeems to run thus: *Uncleanneſs*, &c. is unlawful, but *ſome* Stage-plays are unclean: Therefore *all* Stage-plays are unlawful. The Concluſion does not hold. For no other Stage-plays are unlawful except thoſe that are unclean.

Or let it go in this Manner, *all* Stage-plays *were* unclean in St. *Paul*'s Days; but *Uncleanneſs*, &c. is forbidden, therefore *all* Stage-plays *whether clean or unclean* are forbidden *to the End of the World*; there again the Concluſion is denied. The Apoſtle

poſtle forbids only what is unclean; There-
fore he forbids not ſuch Stage-plays as are
otherwiſe.

2*do*, You obſerve *Page* 51. That *Eu-
trapelia*, the Word here tranſlated Jeſting
ſignifies *the Buffooneries of the Theatre*.
I wiſh you had obliged us with your
Proofs: For my Part, I never heard that
this Word was taken in any ſuch Senſe
either for *theatrical Buffoonery*, or for any
other Sort of *Buffoonery whatſoever*. By its
Original, it ſhould mean *an ingenious Turn
given to Things*, and generally it ſignifies
Facetiouſneſs in private Converſation; ſo
Eraſmus certainly has underſtood it: But
that cannot be the Scripture Meaning in
this Place. In the more remote Purity of
the *Greek*, it was taken (very conſiſtently
with its Derivation) to import *ſomething
ſatyrically witty, but well cover'd*. *Ari-
ſtotle* calls it *Hybrida Pepaideumenen*, a
well bred Affront, and in that Senſe I ſup-
poſe the Word muſt be here taken: For
I do not find any other Interpretation of it
beſides theſe two: Let this laſt be carried
ſo far as to mean even railing, as ſome

People

People unwarrantably render it: (I ſay *unwarrantably*, becauſe the Definition of ſo eminent an Ancient, ſhould be of greater Weight than the Conjectures of a hundred modern *Lexicographers*) yet that does not prove your Point: For Railing is different from Buffoonery, and neither Railing, nor Buffoonery, have any neceſſary Connection with the Stage. It is needleſs to examine your Paraphraſe; for unleſs *Eutrapelia* is taken in your Senſe, that proves nothing.

3tio, You ſay *Page* 54. *That it is your ſincere Opinion that in this Paſſage the Apoſtle has declared againſt all Stages whatever, where Filthineſs, fooliſh Talking or Jeſting is practiſed: For if the Stage is thereby condemn'd, it is not becauſe of the Idolatry, but for the Geſtures, and Language uſed in Plays.* But firſt, that is not the Point in diſpute: No Body doubts, (at leaſt I don't) that Filthineſs, fooliſh Talking, and inconvenient Jeſting, (the Word *inconvenient* or unſeaſonable the Apoſtle immediately ſubjoins,) are forbidden in Plays, and I add, every

where elſe: But what was to be proved is, That *all* Stage-plays are forbidden, which this does not make out. 2*dly*, If the Stage is not condemned for Idolatry, but for the Geſtures and Language, then no Plays, where neither indecent Geſtures, nor indecent Language are to be found are blameable.

4*to*, You ſay, That publick Stews are no where expreſly forbidden; but that the Prohibition is included under that of Uncleanneſs: I conceive that the Conſequence is lame. I cannot ſeparate the Idea of Uncleanneſs from publick Stews, but I can very well imagine a Play, without either idle Talking, Filthineſs, or improper Jeſting.

5*to*, You inſiſt upon the Force of *the* Engliſh *Word, Revelling, as tranſlated from the Greek Komos. And this Revelling*, you ſeem to imagine, *comprehends Stage-playing in a legal or municipal Senſe, and even that the Word Comedy has its Riſe from the Greek Noun Komos.* I cannot at all agree with you in this. For *firſt*, Revelling may be diſtinct both from Banqueting,

quetting, and from Drunkenneſs, and yet may not be Stage-playing; nor is it even certain that theſe two Words, Banquetting and Drunkenneſs are materially diſtinct: For we often ſee exegetick or explanatory Words uſed to ſignify nearly the ſame Things, ſuch as in the Text, 1 *Pet.* iv. 3. *Oinophlugia* and *potoi.*

2*do*, The Word *Komos* is but thrice to be found in the New Teſtament; twice *Komoi* are join'd with *Methai*, and once with *Potoi*; and without ſticking too cloſe to the Words of the Tranſlation, it will appear that *Methai* and *Potoi*, are not at all diſtant in Signification. The Tranſlators indeed render *Methe* by *Drunkenneſs*, and *Potos* by *Banqueting*; but it is apparent, that both mean *Debauches in drinking*, and with one or other of theſe ſynonimous Words, *Komoi* are conſtantly join'd: So that *Komoi* and *Methai*, or *Komoi* and *Potoi* will always mean *Debauches of eating and drinking*. *Komos* by *Suidas* is made equivalent to *Methe* (*Drunkenneſs*) and by *Stephanus* it is tranſlated *Commeſſatio*; a Word of a known Signification, which that learned Man maintains

tains is derived from the *Greek Comos*, and not from the *Latin Comedere*, and he thinks that originally *Comos* is derived from *Coma* (Sleep) becauſe theſe Diverſions were uſually gone about in the Night-time. It cannot make for the Purpoſe, that Interludes often make a Part of ſuch Entertainments. I give up Interludes to ſeaſon Debauchery, with all my Heart: For regular Comedy, far leſs Tragedy, cannot be ſuppoſed to have been admitted there: But I believe too, you may find, that *Flute-muſick* and *Dancing* are in *Greek* ſometimes called *Komoi*, by a Sort of Metonymy, becauſe they were often uſed in ſuch Entertainments: Yet it would be hard to conclude from thence, that to *dance* or *play on the Flute*, is abſolutely forbidden.

If I aim'd at Criticiſm, it might be obſerved, that in *Rom.* xiii. 13. the ſimilar Crimes are linked in Couples together, *Rioting*, (or as you ſay, *Revelling*) *Comoi*, *Comeſſationes*) with *Drunkenneſs*; *Chambering*, (*Coitai*) with *Laſciviouſneſs*; *Strife* with *Anger*; which ſhows that *Komos* is nearer a-kin to

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Drunkenneſs, than *Stage-plays* can in any Propriety be ſaid to be.

4*thly*, I CANNOT agree with you that *Komoi* ſignify, *vain, laſcivious, ludicrous and jocular Repreſentations: Comos* has nothing to do with *Repreſentation*: It means, as I ſaid, a *Debauch* of what is commonly, (but falſly) called *good Fellowſhip*. Comedy I always took to be derived from *Kome* a Village, as no doubt Comedies were originally no other than Ballads. The Antients, particularly *Feſtus*, took it ſo, and that it was taken from *Komos* is a Whim of a modern Critick, *Scaliger*, in which he is followed by few. By the ſame Rule Tragedy, tho' not nam'd, might be forbidden): For a He-Goat is the uſual Emblem of Laſciviouſneſs (a Thing frequently prohibited: And as *Tragedy* is derived from *Tragos* a *Goat*, it therefore falls under the Prohibition. *Farce* too, (which comes from *farcire*, to ſtuff and ſuppoſes *Intemperance in eating*) may eaſily be brought in by the like Reaſoning.

As

As for *the Maſter of the Revels*, I have underſtood that Officer to be *a Cenſor and Corrector of the Licentiouſneſs of publick Shows*; *Revels* come from the *French* Word *Reveiller*, (*to keep People awake*) and by a common enough Figure all publick Shows are brought under that Name, at whatever Time of the Day they are exhibited. But I fancy it is not right Reaſoning, to conclude, that every Thing under *the Maſter of the Revel's Office is unlawful*, becauſe the Word *Revels may bear an unlawful Signification*, any more than it would be to inter from the Word *Jeſting* in the Text, that even the *moſt harmleſs Jeſt* is criminal. But if you think this goes too far, you may pleaſe to put, according to your own Rule, the Word *Riot* in its Place, and then the Argument will ſtand thus. *Riot* is a *legal and municipal* Term for a *Tumult*; *Revel* and *Riot* means the ſame Thing; *ergo*, *by the Maſter of the Revels*, is meant *a Juſtice of the Peace*.

Again; if *Riot* and *Revelling* is the ſame Thing, and if *Komos* (here tranſlated *Revelling*) is as well tranſlated *Riot* in another

ther Place, (the Argument is good *ad hominem*) then *Aſotia*, which, in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, is tranſlated *rioting*, is the ſame with revelling, and *Komoi* and *Aſotiæ*, are ſynonimous Terms: If ſo, *Komos* ſignifies only *exceſſive* and criminal *merry making*, for *Aſotia* ſignifies *Exceſs*, and is ſo rendered in other Places: And therefore, to include a Crime *neceſſarily* in the Term *Komos*, is to beg the Queſtion between us, which is, whether *Comos* here ſignifies *all* merry making, or only *exceſſive* merry making: Or, if you will, if it ſignifies *all* Stage-plays, or only *filthy* Stage-plays.

6to, When you affirm in Page 59, *That ridiculing Vice is in itſelf ſinful*; *That the Sins of the World call for Rivers of Tears, and not for Laughter*; *That* as the wiſe Man ſays, *Fools make a Mock at Sin*; *and therefore that no Vice at all ought to be brought upon the Stage*, I am perſuaded that you have been miſled by the Ambiguity of the Words. No Doubt it is a Matter of great Sorrow, that the World is ſo ſinful; and no doubt none but Fools would think this univerſal Sinfulneſs a Subject for Laugh-

Laughter. But, Sir, there is no Sort of Dif-
pute concerning the *Diſeaſe*: We are all
agreed in this ſad Truth, *that Sin abounds*:
Only the Queſtion is, as to the *Cure*; how
theſe Vices are to be rooted out. It cannot
be denied that Faults *may poſſibly* be ba-
niſh'd merely by the Force of Ridicule.
Not to inſiſt upon the *Pagan* Authority of
Horace; I find many Inſtances of ſuch Prac-
tices in Scripture; to give but one, we have
a Ridicule of that ſolemn and vicious Fool-
ry, Idolatry, by the Prophet *Elijah*. All
Vice, beſides being criminal, is ſilly; and
therefore may not only be reaſon'd againſt,
but treated as ridiculous; Unleſs you would
utterly baniſh Arguments *ab abſurdo*, which
are as ſtrictly concluſive, as the moſt direct
Demonſtrations. And you can no more infer
from a Man's taking this Method of expoſing
Vice, that he thinks it laudable, or even
indifferent, than from the Phyſician's artful
Conduct in ſetting his Patient a laughing to
burſt an Abſceſs in his Breaſt, it can be con-
cluded, that he thought the Impoſthume
not dangerous. In ſhort, the Diſtemper
calls for our Sorrow, and *Rivers of Tears*
bu

but Oceans of Tears can have no Influence as to the Remedy.

You ſay too, *Page* 58, That *for the Recommendation of Virtue, the Goſpel does not want the Aſſiſtance of the Stage.* The Goſpel indeed is not defective, but we are. The Syſtem is abſolutely perfect, but the particular Precepts muſt be explain'd and inforced to our ſqueamiſh Minds: And that too, frequently and variouſly; ſometimes warmly; at other Times in cool Blood; now with a grave, and now with a ſmiling Countenance. All theſe Ways ought to have the ſame End, to make us better Men; and if a well regulated Stage (ſuch as I plead for) is to be baniſh'd as ſuperfluous and even ſinful (as implying an Imperfection in the Scripture) I can ſee no Way to ſave Moral Converſations, Eſſays, and Sermons, which alſo muſt be given up, in Conſequence of the ſame Principles.

Thus, *Sir*, I imagine it will be clear That no ſuch abſolute Prohibition is neceſſary, and that the Honour of the Apoſtles is very ſafe. They have not been wanting

in giving an ample Teſtimony againſt *all Immoralities*, and no doubt *an immoral Stage* is *included*: To ſuppoſe the contrary is to *chicane* with them indeed. I do not find one Word againſt *Gladiators* in the New Teſtament, but many againſt *Cruelty*, and many Injunctions of *univerſal Love*, *Charity and Benevolence*, which, as I take it, amounts to the ſame Thing. In ſhort, you ſeem to think that becauſe of the *Danger of Abuſes*, the very *Uſe* of the Stage muſt be aboliſh'd, and you *take it for granted*, that the Apoſtles were of your Opinion; and that *their Reputation for being faithful Miniſters* depends upon it. In my humble Judgment, they might be *very faithful Miniſters*, and yet by their Silence (as to this *total* Prohibition) may have left us at Liberty to conclude, that the Stage, under a proper Government, may be of ſingular Uſe to Religion and to Mankind. Nor dare I, for the ſame Reaſon, condemn the moderate Uſe of ſuch Entertainments, even where they ſerve only to *unbend* the Mind without *improving* it, providing they are in themſelves innocent, and tend not to *relax* it; nor do I ſee any greater Crime in laugh-

laughing at a harmleſs Joke from *Arlequin*, than from any Friend in a private Converſation.

It is for theſe Reaſons that I am of Opinion, that the Stage not being in itſelf ſinful, we are not to wreſt Scripture to prove an abſolute Prohibition of it.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

Yours, &c.

FINIS.